A Benchmark Report on the targets of When kids come first - 2007

Department of Education

New Nouveau
Brunswick

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Minister's Message

It is with great pleasure that I submit the New Brunswick Department of Education's ***Benchmark Report on the targets of When kids come first***.

When kids come first, our five-year framework for increasing student learning and academic performance, is an ambitious plan. It is based on the vision that we can build the best education system in Canada, an integral component of our self-sufficiency agenda.

To be the best, we need accurate and reliable information to measure progress on the indicators New Brunswickers care passionately about in helping our children succeed. In addition to performing well on academic assessments, we want our children to be creative, to be critical thinkers and problem solvers, to be ethical, and to be well-informed. We want them to understand the world and contribute to their community. And we want them to have the skills they need for a lifetime of rewarding work in a self-sufficient New Brunswick.

In order to create a sense of urgency in meeting these targets, New Brunswick's public education system needs to up-date New Brunswickers on progress in meeting our goals and targets. By taking these benchmarks and reporting annually on progress, we can celebrate and share our collective successes, and at the same time focus in on areas which need improvement. Balancing successes and areas of improvement through this public report will help to ensure the system is accountable.

We have been working hard to focus on early literacy and we are seeing improvement. However, we also know we have a long way to go to reach our targets.

The timelines and actions of ***When kids come first*** are ambitious and will challenge all New Brunswickers if we are to be successful. However, every parent knows how quick and how fleeting the journey to adulthood can be. We must all be committed to the actions of our plan if our goal is to be realized. We hope the vision of our plan and the needs of our kids will inspire citizens to collective action, and the achievement of self-sufficiency for our province.

Honourable Kelly Lamrock
Minister

December 2007

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Mission Statement for New Brunswick Public Education

To have each student develop the attributes needed to be a lifelong learner, to achieve personal fulfillment and to contribute to a productive, just and democratic society.

Vision

We can build the best education system in Canada.

Three Clear Goals

1. Every child will arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.

2. Every child will leave Grade 5 having mastered the tools to learn - reading, writing and numeracy.

3. Every child will graduate from high school having had the opportunity to discover his or her personal strengths and to find something he or she loves doing.

An Accountability Framework

When we set out to build the best education system in Canada, we knew we faced a huge challenge. We also knew that the success of an education system is often measured on exam results alone.

Educators, parents, communities, and businesses all want to see students develop the skills and attitudes they need to be successful in their adult life. We want our students to do well in school – to be able to read, write and do math. But we want more than that. We want them to be well-balanced: to make friends, to be physically active, to be good citizens, to participate in the life of their school, to be critical thinkers, and to be well-prepared for the world beyond the schoolroom door.

We believe that if we can help our students achieve all of these things, our system will have done its job and will truly be accountable.

The new education plan, ***When kids come first***, was released earlier this year. It contains 142 actions and a range of 23 targets (see next page) to be achieved by 2013. This ***Benchmark Report*** is designed to give parents and the public a complete picture of where we currently stand on the various indicators of success. Next year, and in the years that follow, we will report on the progress we have made.

In the following pages of this report, benchmark data is shown for the majority of the 23 targets. For the most part we have used data from the school year just ended: 2006-2007. For some targets, especially national and international comparisons, the data is quite a bit older. For others, information is not yet available and we will be putting in place new data-gathering mechanisms this year.

Where we can, we have provided information at both the provincial and district levels. However, this is not meant to be seen as a "ranking" of school districts. Rather, it is a way of ensuring transparency, and of meeting our accountability commitments to parents and the public. To build on this, we expect districts to report results for schools within their own jurisdiction.

Targets	Commitment # from When kids come first
1. All kids come to kindergarten school-ready.	1
2. 80% of kids identified as requiring a Special Education Plan for kindergarten have the plan in place upon arrival in September.	1
3. 90% of parents of children entering kindergarten participate in the *I'm Ready for School Initiative* at their neighbourhood school.	1
4. 90% of kids reach the reading standard at Grade 2 and again at Grade 4; 20% exceed it.	2
5. 90% of kids reach the numeracy standard at Grade 3 and again at Grade 5; 20% exceed it.	2
6. 85% of students reach or exceed the standard in Grades 6-12 on provincial assessments of literacy, numeracy and science.	2
7. The top 20% of New Brunswick students on literacy, numeracy and science assessments achieve at a level comparable with their peers in Canada's top three provinces.	2
8. 70% of high school graduates are able to function effectively in speaking their second official language.	7
9. NB ranks among the top three in the country on national and international assessments in literacy, numeracy and science.	2
10. NB's post-secondary participation rate is among the top three in Canada, and an increasing proportion obtain a post-secondary credential.	3
11. NB is in the top three provinces in Canada for high school graduation.	3
12. First Nations students achieve at levels comparable with their peers on provincial assessments.	7
13. 90% of high school graduates report that they intend to vote in the first election for which they are eligible (federal, provincial, municipal).	3
14. The percentage of children and youth who are considered active enough for optimal growth and development increases by 10 percentage points.	8
15. At least 75 community schools are operating in New Brunswick, with support from the community and the private sector.	6
16. An increasing percentage of students in Grades 6-12 report they feel safe and belong in their school; the level of safety reported by students with particular learning challenges is comparable to the level reported by other students; bullying behaviours decrease steadily in New Brunswick schools.	8
17. 90% of students and parents report that students received the services they needed to support their learning.	5
18. 80% of students with Special Education Plans are meeting identified learning outcomes, and interventions are in place for the remaining 20%.	5
19. 100% of schools have adequate emergency preparedness plans and lock-down procedures in place, in collaboration with appropriate authorities.	8
20. 90% of teachers report they have been successful in integrating technology in teaching their students.	4
21. 90% of graduates report that they have had opportunities to take courses in the trades, the arts, or co-op or volunteer experience.	3
22. An increasing percentage of principals report that projects from the *Innovative Learning Fund* are having a positive impact on teaching and learning in their schools.	4
23. An increasing percentage of teachers report that gifted students are given the opportunity to reach their full potential at school.	5

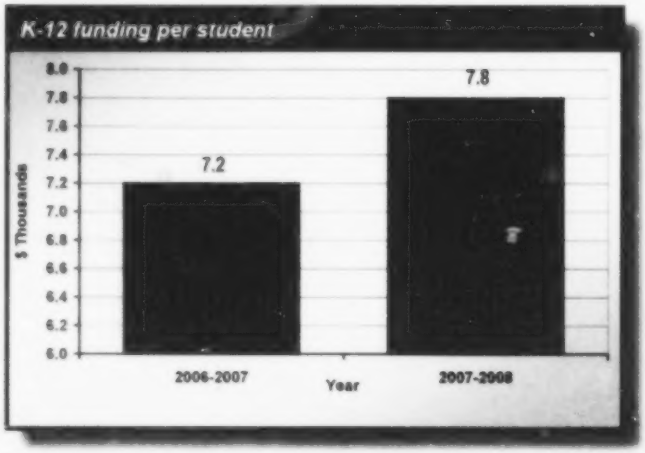
Investments in education - K-12

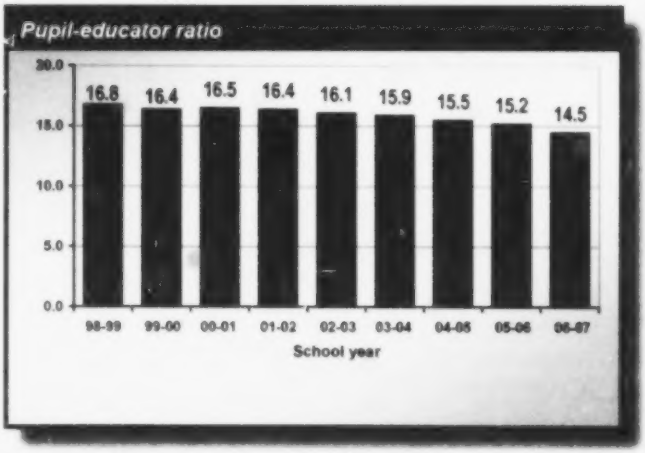
If we expect to see results in education, we must make the necessary investments.

For the year just ended (2006-2007), operating funding for K-12 was $817.7 million. For the current year, it increased to $864.0 million – the highest level of investment ever. This represents funding of $7,802 per student compared to $4,881 per student in 1998-1999.

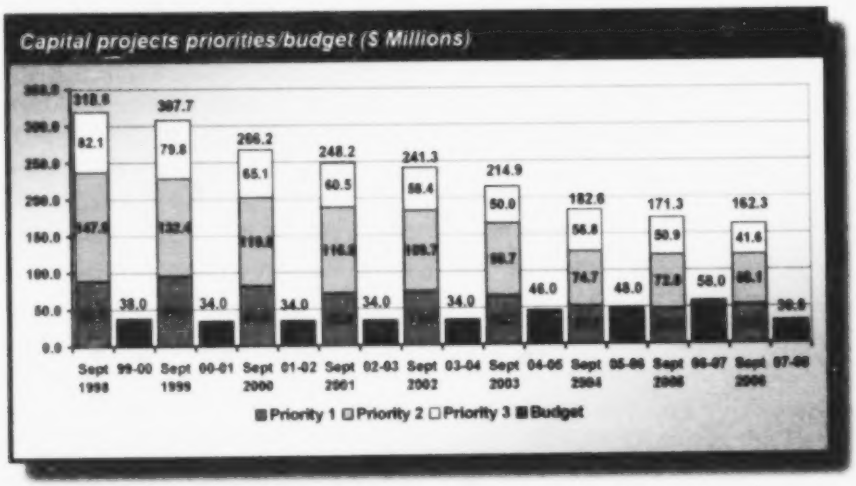
Although increased funding for the classroom was the priority for this year, an investment of $30.6 million was also made in the capital budget. This will fund 99 construction, renovation and improvement projects in schools around the province.

Over 99% of the education budget is expended in supporting learning in the classroom. In 2007-2008, despite continued declining enrolment, another 318 teaching positions were added to the system, putting more teachers in direct contact with students. Continued investment in teaching positions has a positive effect on the pupil-educator ratio, which is 14.5. The ratio was 16.8 in 1998-1999.





This figure shows that, although many urgent capital projects have been tackled, there is still a huge need to address. The Department will continue to work with District Education Councils and their school district staff to identify and prioritize these needs.



Priority 1 (urgent and important), 2 (very important but not as urgent) and 3 (important but not urgent) Capital budget requests, as determined by District Education Councils and their school district staff, and the corresponding annual capital budget.

Capital projects priorities/budget ($ Millions)
350.0
300.0
250.0
200.0
315.8
307.7
266.2
147.9
132.4
119.9
116.8
98.7
74.7
72.8
68.1
30.6
88.8
95.5
81.6
70.9
73.2
66.2
51.1
47.6
52.6
Sept 2002
Sept 2004
Sept 2005
Sept 2006
Priority 1
Priority 2
Priority 3
Budget

Commitments

1. To Ensure School Readiness	Success in early learning sets the stage for successful lifelong learning. ***When kids come first*** focuses on providing the right conditions for improving pre-kindergarten school readiness and successful and seamless transitions into kindergarten.
2. To Work Urgently on Literacy, Numeracy and Science	Reading, writing, math and science concepts are the tools for learning. We will set high standards for students to master these skills by Grade 5 and improve them throughout higher grades. We will insist on early and timely interventions to aid struggling students and challenge high achievers. Schools that excel at these interventions will be called upon to lead, and schools that struggle will be helped to change. Teacher training and professional development will be a cornerstone of the system.
3. To Help Children Develop a Passion for Learning	A child reads, writes and solves problems best when he or she cares about the subject matter. Especially in the teenage years, a child learns best not by absorbing lists of facts but by solving problems he or she cares about. ***When kids come first*** will give children the guidance and options to discover their strengths and passions, and will give teachers the flexibility, resources and technology to let students use their intellectual interests to tackle the curriculum.
4. To Give Educators the Tools to Innovate and Lead	New Brunswick is blessed with well-educated, passionate and talented teachers. Teachers with good ideas should have ways to get resources quickly to try new ideas, find out what works and learn from each other. ***When kids come first*** seeks to give teachers and principals the tools to lead change.
5. To Live Up to the Promise of Inclusion	New Brunswick is an international leader in inclusive education and ***When kids come first*** is designed to ensure the best interests of all kids are served within an inclusive environment.
6. To Engage Communities and Partners in Improving Schools	***When kids come first*** acknowledges that success in education is linked to a new alliance between the school and its community. Community schools set the stage for more active community, volunteer sector and private sector engagement throughout our kids' education.
7. To Promote Cultural Identity and Linguistic Growth	The need to celebrate and nurture the language and culture of each official language community is reflected in ***When kids come first***. We also need to build our second language capacity in both anglophone and francophone sectors. As well, First Nations education priorities and supports for new immigrants are all fundamental elements of ***When kids come first***.
8. To Create Healthy and Safe Schools	***When kids come first*** sets out specific actions required to make our schools healthy and safe for our kids, our school personnel and our communities.

Commitment # 1: To Ensure School Readiness

Too many children are starting school "at-risk".

The language skills of a pre-schooler are a strong predictor of how successful he or she will be at school. With a high rate of adult illiteracy in New Brunswick, we must find and use new ways to help parents help their children prepare for school. A new *I'm Ready for School Initiative* which will include an outreach program, school readiness clinics and an early language skills assessment is planned for September 2008. This will be an important tool in facilitating the transition into kindergarten.

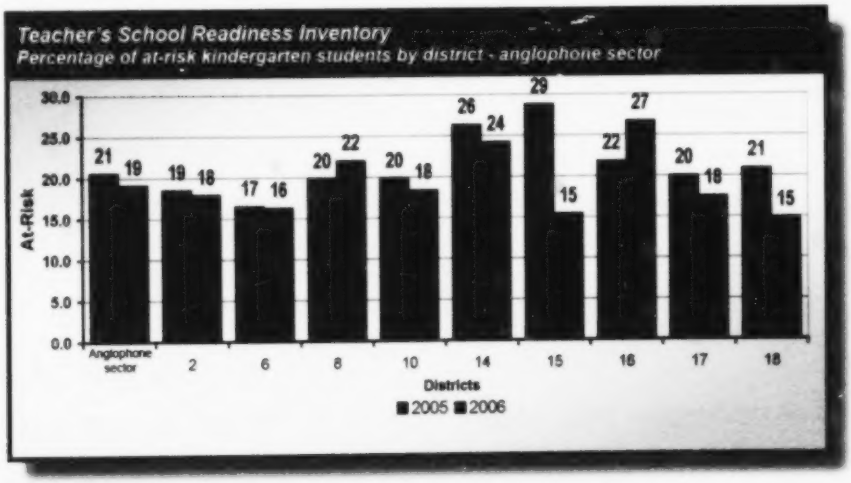
Targets

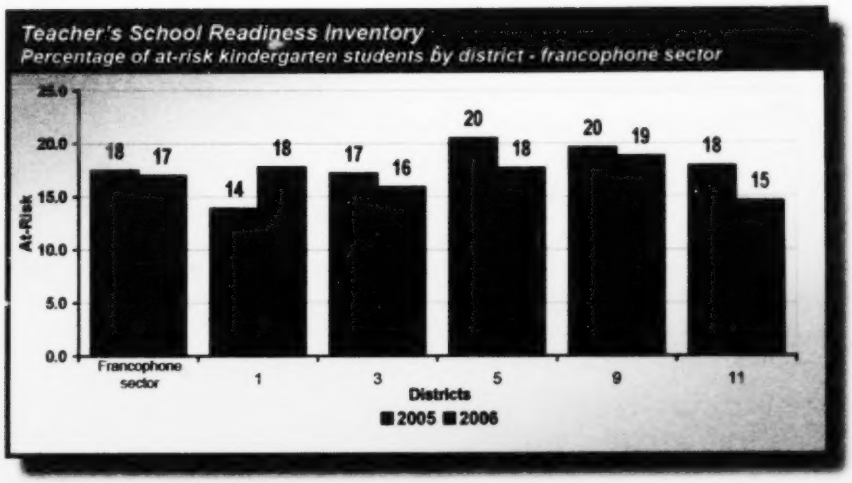
- All kids come to kindergarten school-ready.
- 80% of kids identified as requiring a Special Education Plan for kindergarten have the plan in place upon arrival in September.
- 90% of parents of children entering kindergarten participate in the *I'm Ready for School Initiative* at their neighbourhood school.

Benchmarks

Measure	Target 2013	2005-2006	2006-2007	
Children come to kindergarten school-ready.*	100%	20.6% at-risk	19.1% at-risk	Anglophone
		17.5% at-risk	17.0% at-risk	Francophone
Kindergarten students needing a Special Education Plan have it in place in September.	80%	**	**	Anglophone Francophone
Parents participate in *I'm Ready for School.*	90%	**	**	Anglophone Francophone

*As measured by the Teacher's School Readiness Inventory (TSRI) which uses a series of 5-point scales to assess key skills and traits that have a proven relationship with future success in school (attention span, verbal fluency, interest and participation, letter and identification skills, and printing skills).
** Developing a data-gathering mechanism for 2007-2008.





Steps taken

The data currently shows that approximately one in every six children in New Brunswick is coming to kindergarten unprepared for school. On measures of attention, language, letter identification and so on, these children are starting at a disadvantage. This is one of the most significant challenges we face in the school system. If we can help more children get ready for school, we can put them on the path to learning success. As such, since the release of ***When kids come first***, we have:

- Hired an Early Years' co-ordinator for each district.
- Started work on designing the new *I'm Ready for School Initiative.*
- Agreed to replace the Teacher's School Readiness Inventory with the more comprehensive Early Years Evaluation (EYE) assessment.
- Asked school districts to ensure that files follow children from school to school, to ensure that appropriate help and interventions can be made.
- Worked with Family and Community Services in developing an early learning and childcare curriculum which is coordinated with school-readiness indicators.
- Initiated discussions with First Nations on a First Nations education strategy founded on the work of the Provincial Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee related to school readiness.

Commitment # 2:
To Work Urgently on Literacy, Numeracy and Science

Before children can read to learn, they have to learn to read. Children that haven't acquired the basics by the end of Grade 5 are likely to experience difficulties throughout the rest of their schooling. For that reason, we are putting a strong focus on helping learners who struggle in the early grades. Results of provincial exams give us the type of information we need to be able to intervene urgently and to help those at risk.

Targets (Grades 1-5)

- 90% of kids reach the reading standard at Grade 2 and again at Grade 4; 20% exceed it.
- 90% of kids reach the numeracy standard at Grade 3 and again at Grade 5; 20% exceed it.

In both sectors, progress is being made in early literacy and numeracy.

Benchmarks - Provincial assessments (Grades 1-5)

Measure	Target 2013		2005-2006		2006-2007		
	reach or exceed	exceed	reach or exceed	exceed	reach or exceed	exceed	
Reading Grade 2 - children reach/ exceed standard	**90%**	**20%**	71%	19%	72%	**20%**	Anglophone (English)
			74%	**22%**	79%	**27%**	Anglophone (French Immersion)
			63%	17%	70%	**22%**	Francophone - silent reading
			58%	12%	63%	14%	Francophone - reading aloud
Reading Grade 4 - children reach/ exceed standard	**90%**	**20%**	70%	11%	70%	12%	Anglophone (English)
			63%	11%	67%	12%	Anglophone (French Immersion)
			-	-	*	*	Francophone
Numeracy Grade 3 - children reach/ exceed standard	**90%**	**20%**	-	-	*	*	Anglophone
			-	-	*	*	Francophone
Numeracy Grade 5 - children reach/ exceed standard	**90%**	**20%**	68%	**30%**	67%	**29%**	Anglophone (English and French Immersion)
			49%	6%	67%	**21%**	Francophone

*Developing a data-gathering mechanism for 2007-2008
Numbers in bold pink font show where we have reached or surpassed the target.

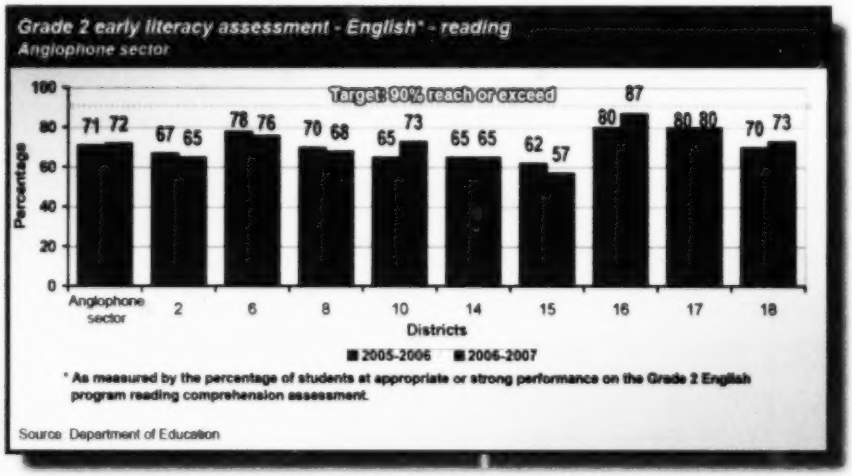
In addition to the above assessments of reading and numeracy, both sectors also have a number of other assessments in Grades 1-5.

For example, in the anglophone sector there is a writing assessment in Grade 2. In 2005-2006, 58% of students in the English program reached or exceeded the standard, with 4% exceeding it. In 2006-2007, 57% reached or exceeded the standard, a 1 percentage point decrease from the previous year. Just over 6% exceeded the standard, an increase of 2 percentage points from the previous year. In 2005-2006, in French Immersion, 67% reached or exceeded the standard, with 8% exceeding it. In 2006-2007, 71% of students reached or exceeded the standard, an increase of 4 percentage points from 2006. Just over 16% exceeded that standard, an increase of 8 percentage points from the previous year.

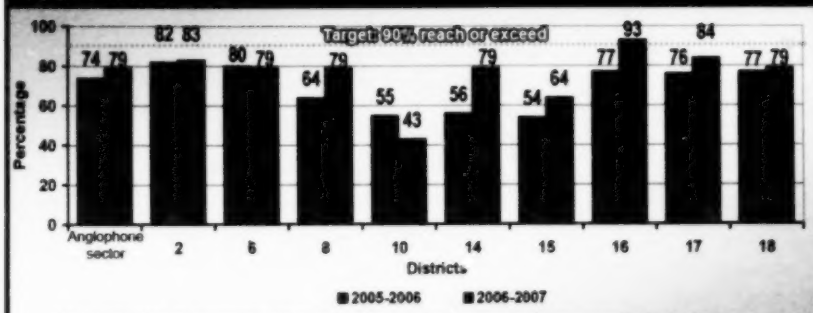
In Grade 4 writing, 37% of students in the English program reached or exceeded the standard, with 4% exceeding it. In French Immersion, 56% reached or exceeded the standard, with 5% exceeding it.

In the francophone sector, students are assessed on science in Grade 5. In 2006-2007, 85% reached or exceeded the standard, with 15% exceeding it.

While focussing on the basics of literacy, numeracy and science in the early grades is essential, it is no less important that these areas continue to be emphasized in the later grades. We are committed to a provincial testing program at various grade levels to help us understand whether our children are acquiring the skills they need to learn, and to ensure that we produce graduates who are literate and numerate.



Grade 2 early literacy assessment - French Immersion - reading*
Anglophone sector

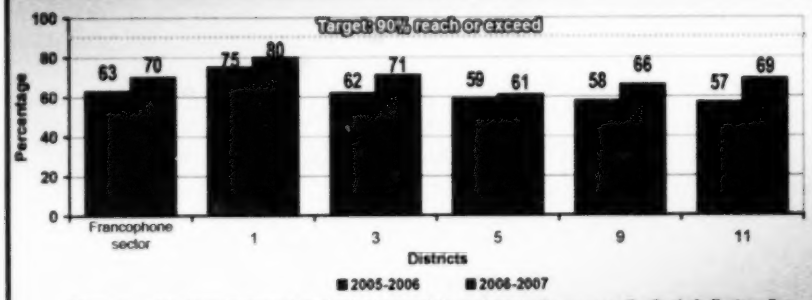


* As measured by the percentage of students at appropriate or strong performance on the Grade 2 French Immersion reading comprehension assessment.

Source: Department of Education

In the anglophone sector, district performance in early literacy varies, particularly among French Immersion students.

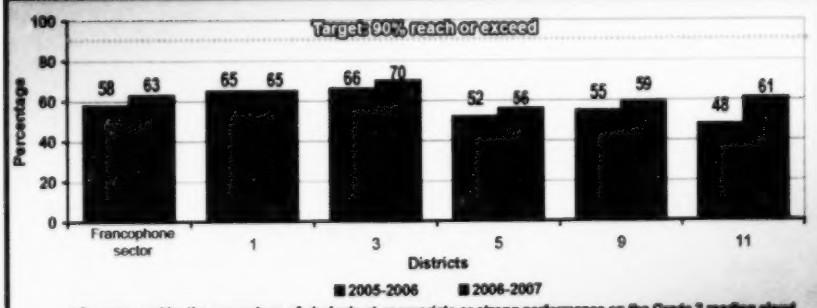
Grade 2 early literacy assessment - silent reading*
Francophone sector



* As measured by the percentage of students at appropriate or strong performance on the Grade 2 silent reading comprehension assessment.

Source: Department of Education

Grade 2 early literacy assessment - reading aloud*
Francophone sector

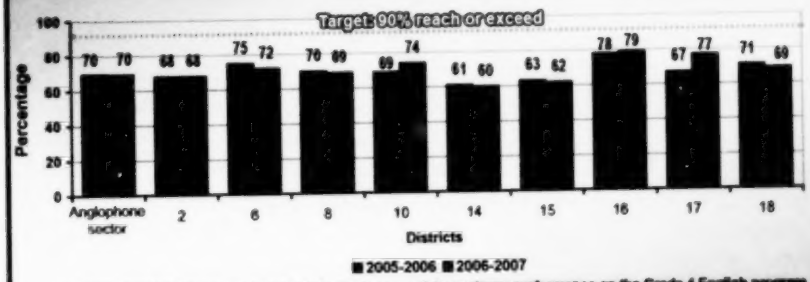


* As measured by the percentage of students at appropriate or strong performance on the Grade 2 reading aloud comprehension assessment.

Source: Department of Education

Grade 4 literacy assessment - English* - reading

Anglophone sector

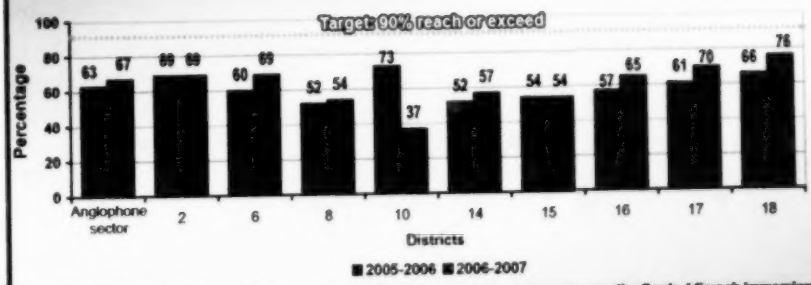


* As measured by the percentage of students at appropriate or strong performance on the Grade 4 English program reading comprehension assessment.

Source: Department of Education

Grade 4 literacy assessment - French Immersion* - reading

Anglophone sector

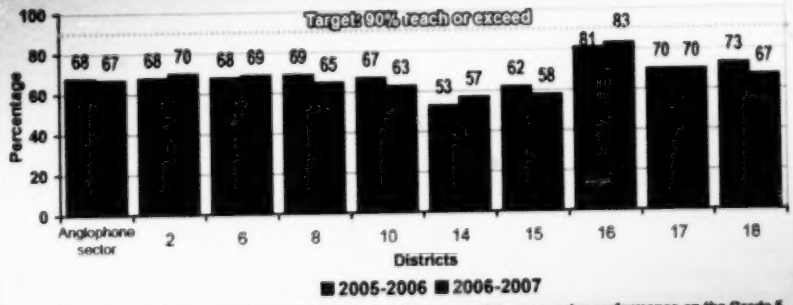


* As measured by the percentage of students at appropriate or strong performance on the Grade 4 French Immersion reading comprehension assessment.

Source: Department of Education

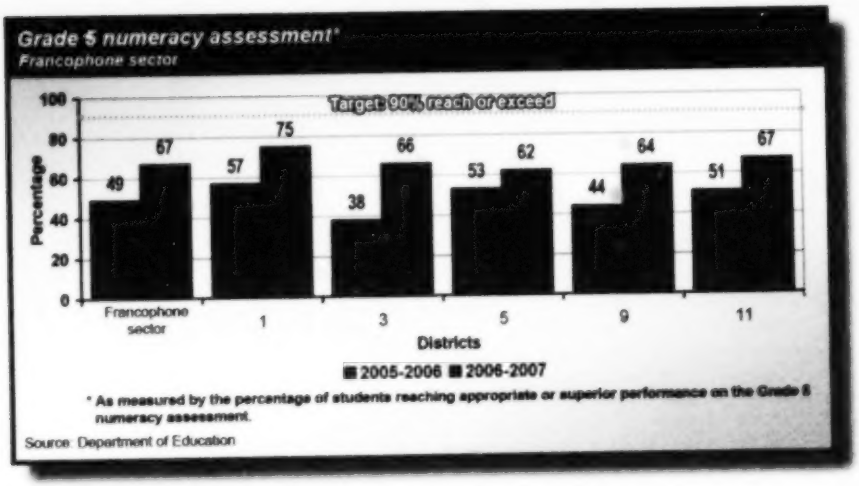
Grade 5 numeracy assessment*

Anglophone sector



* As measured by the percentage of students reaching appropriate or superior performance on the Grade 5 numeracy assessment.

Source: Department of Education



Targets (Grades 6-12)

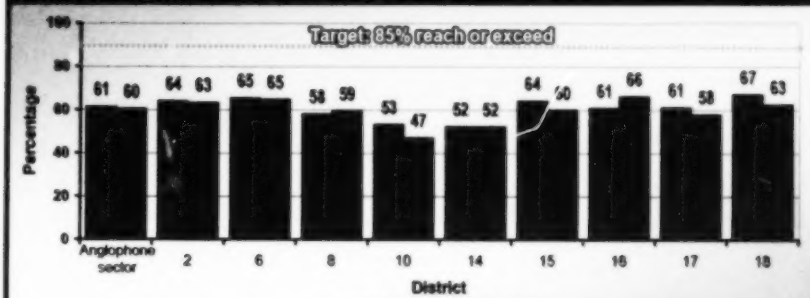
- 85% of students reach or exceed the standard in Grades 6-12 on provincial assessments of literacy, numeracy and science.
- The top 20% of New Brunswick students on literacy, numeracy and science assessments achieve at a level comparable with their peers in Canada's top three provinces.
- NB ranks among the top three in the country on national and international assessments in literacy, numeracy and science.

Exam results in Grades 6-12 show there is a long way to go to meet the targets.

Benchmarks - Provincial assessments (Grades 6-12)

Measure		Target 2013	2005-2006	2006-2007	
Children meet the literacy standard	Grade 7 (reading) Grade 7 (writing)	**85%**	61% 43%	60% 43%	Anglophone (English and FI)
	Grade 8 (reading) Grade 8 (writing)	**85%**	65% 61%	55% 57%	Francophone
	Grade 11 (reading) Grade 11 (writing)	**85%**	53% 57%	66% 63%	Francophone
Children meet the numeracy standard	Grade 8	**85%**	58%	58%	Anglophone (English and FI)
		85%	61%	49%	Francophone
Children meet the science standard	Grade 6 (pilot)	**85%**	-	Under review	Anglophone (English and FI)

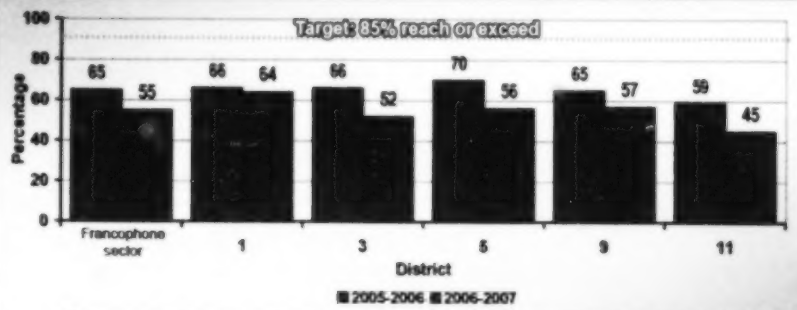
Grade 7 literacy assessment - reading*
Anglophone sector



* As measured by the percentage of students reaching appropriate or superior performance on the Grade 7 literacy assessment.

Source: Department of Education

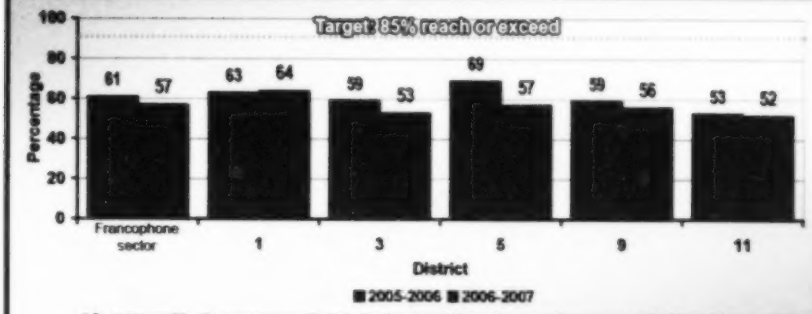
Grade 8 language arts assessment - reading*
Francophone sector



* As measured by the percentage of students at appropriate or strong performance on the Grade 8 language arts assessment.

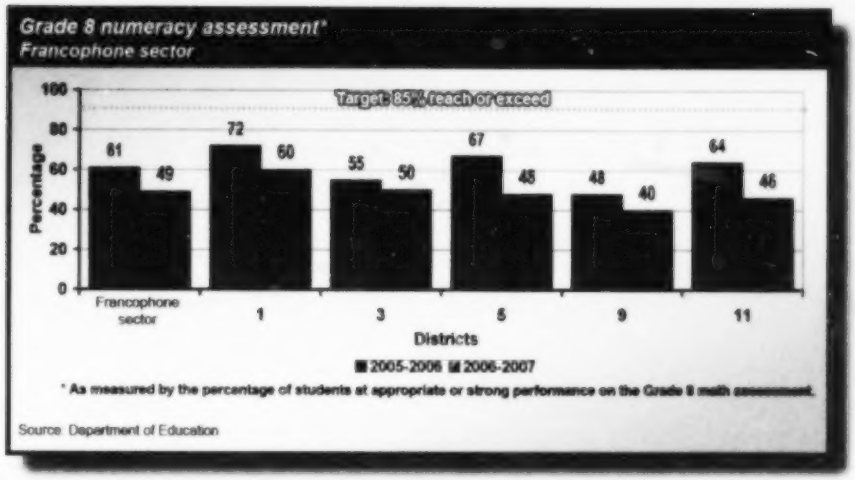
Source: Department of Education

Grade 8 language arts assessment - writing*
Francophone sector



* As measured by the percentage of students at appropriate or strong performance on the Grade 8 language arts assessment.

Source: Department of Education



Benchmarks - National and International assessments (Grades 6-12)

The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) has replaced the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), and its first assessment took place in Spring 2007. It focused on reading, mathematics and science. Results should be available early next year.

The results of both New Brunswick 13-year-olds and 16-year-olds (anglophone and francophone) on the 2004 SAIP science assessment showed New Brunswick students achieving at levels below their peers from across Canada.

As important as provincial assessments are in enabling us to measure our progress from year to year, it is equally important to know where we stand in relation to other countries. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a test of 15-year olds in literacy, numeracy and science. It takes place on a three-year cycle, and in 2006 all Canadian provinces and 57 countries took part. In 2000, New Brunswick scored above the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average, but ranked tenth among provinces. In the 2003 assessment, New Brunswick ranked ninth, and in 2006, New Brunswick ranked tenth.

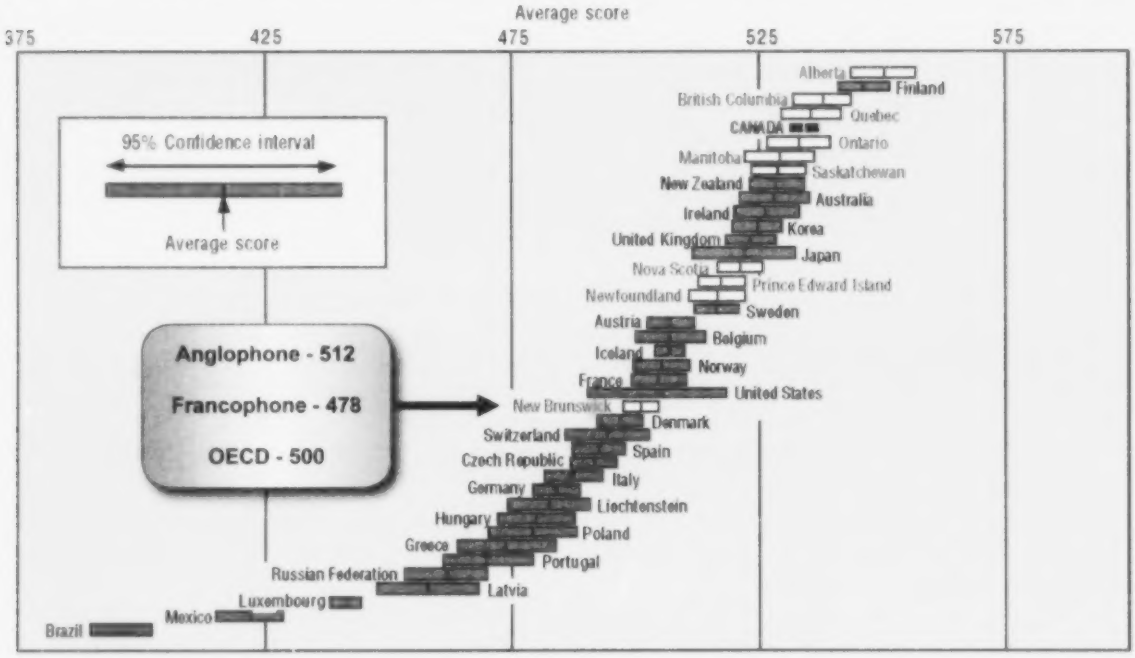
In national and international assessments, New Brunswick has a great deal of ground to make up to reach the targets. This is especially true for francophone students.

Measure	Target 2013	Rank	
NB ranks among the top three in the country on national and international assessments in literacy, numeracy and science.	**Among top 3 provinces**	Literacy* (2000) - 10th Numeracy* (2003) - 9th Science* (2006) - 10th	Province
The 20% of top performing students are on par with those in other provinces on literacy, numeracy, and science.**	**Among top 3 provinces**	Literacy* (2000) - 10th Numeracy* (2003) - 9th Science* (2006) - 10th	Province

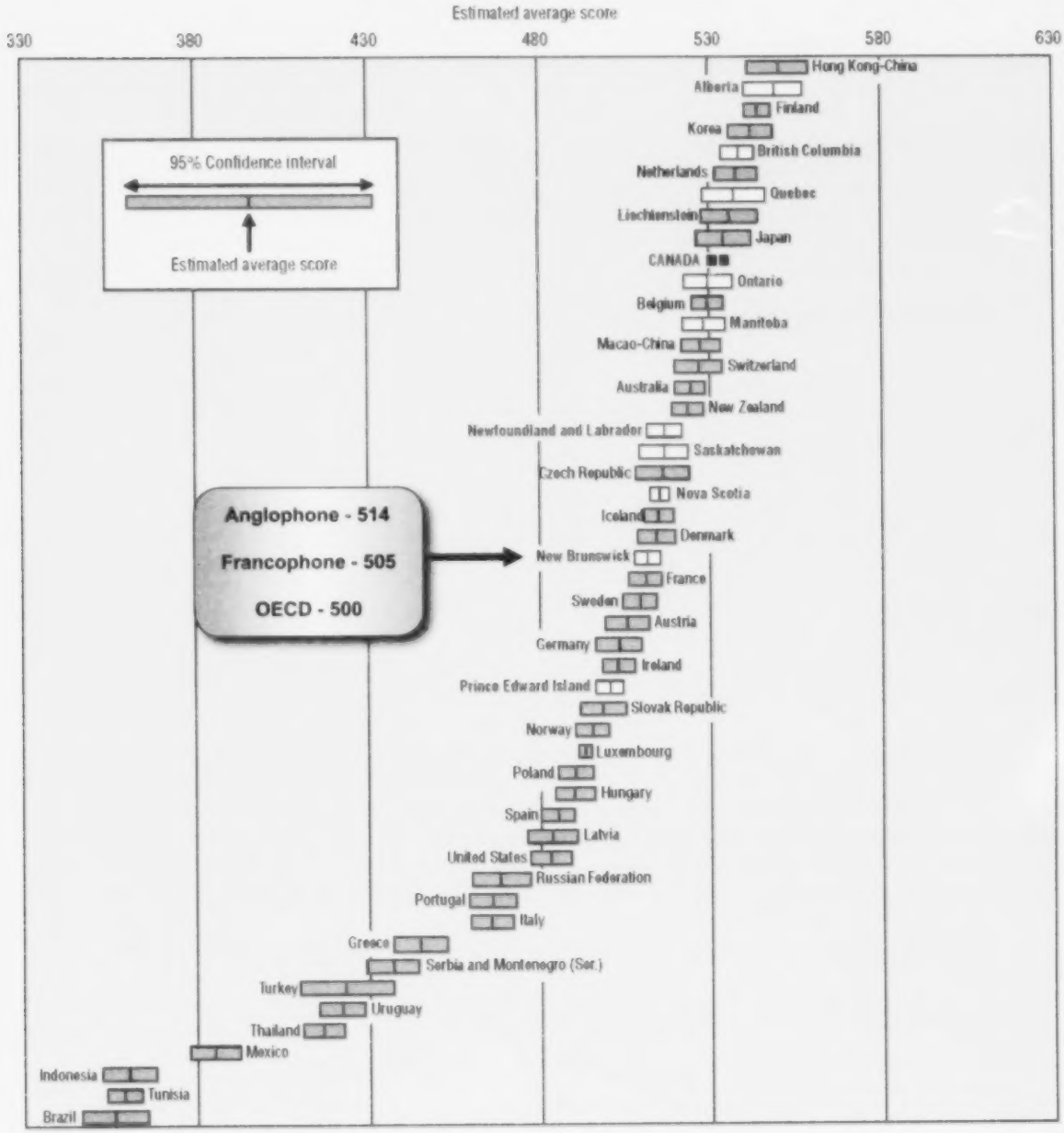
*Primary assessment
**Although the target is 20%, PISA provides results for the top 25%.

Program for International Student Assessement (PISA) - performance of Canada's youth in Reading (2000), Mathematics (2003) and Science (2006) - findings for Canadians aged 15.

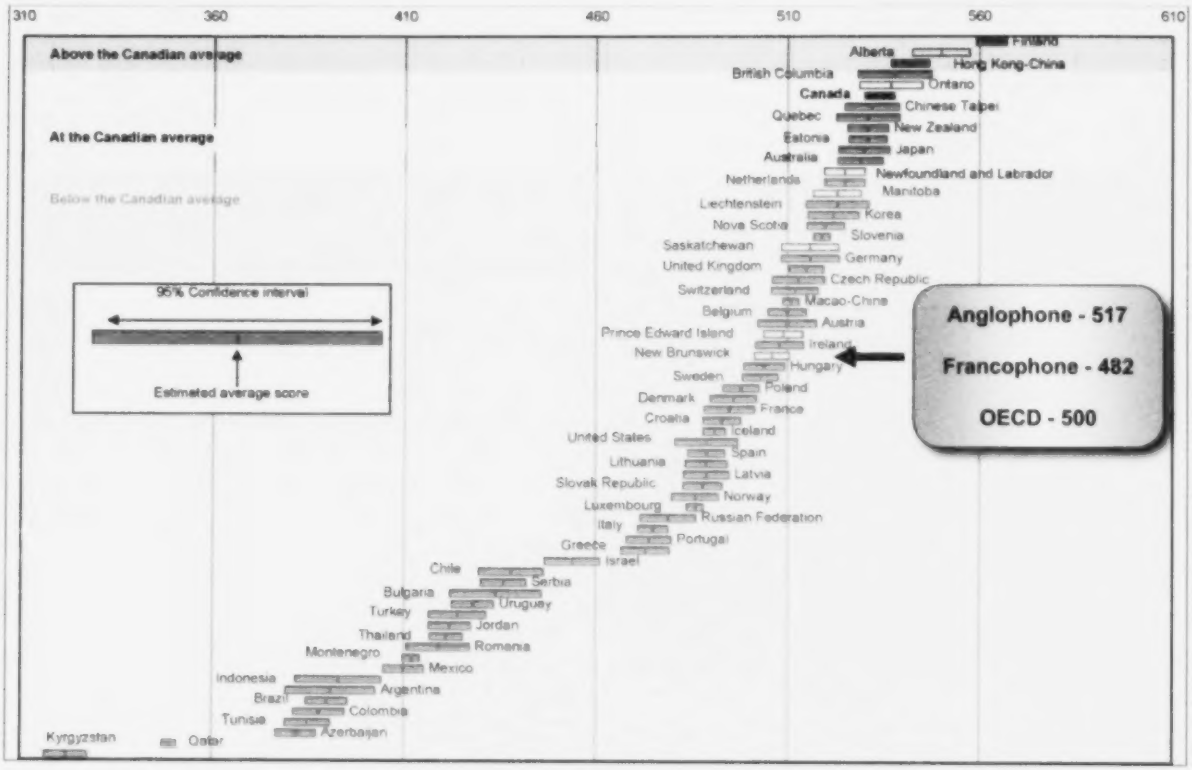
Average Scores and Confidence Intervals by Province and Country: READING



Estimated Average Scores and Confidence Intervals for Provinces and Countries:
COMBINED MATHEMATICS



Average Scores and Confidence Intervals for Provinces and Countries: SCIENCE



Steps taken

This year, a renewed emphasis has been placed on provincial testing as a way of identifying and helping students and schools that are struggling. In line with linguistic duality, the anglophone and francophone sectors each develop and administer their own assessments. Below is the current schedule, by sector:

Assessments – Anglophone Sector (2006-2007)	Timeframe	Assessments – Francophone Sector (2006-2007)	Timeframe
• Kindergarten - Teacher's School Readiness Inventory (Simner)	October/ November	• Kindergarten - Teacher's School Readiness Inventory (Simner)	January
• Grade 2 literacy	June	• Grade 2 literacy	May/June
• Grade 4 literacy	June	• Grade 5 mathematics	May
• Grade 5 numeracy	June	• Grade 5 science	May
• Grade 6 science (pilot)	June	• Grade 8 mathematics	May
• Grade 7 literacy	October	• Grade 8 language arts	May
• Grade 8 mathematics	June	• Grade 10 English second language	January/June
• Grade 9 English Language Proficiency	October	• Grade 11 language arts	May/June
• Grade 10 French Oral Proficiency	June	• Grade 11 mathematics	January/June
• Grade 10 French literacy	April		
• Grade 12 French Oral Proficiency	April/May		

Both sectors are committed to ensuring their curriculum and assessment frameworks are of high quality and relevant. As such, since the release of ***When kids come first***, we have:

- Created 40 new teacher positions for mathematics intervention.
- Started work to develop the K-5 *I Can Learn Initiative* which will help ensure kids acquire the basics in literacy, numeracy and science.
- Implemented a new mathematics action plan, involving math mentors (anglophone).
- Piloted a long-term professional development strategy and provided funding to districts to support professional development in mathematics and science (both sectors).
- Introduced new mathematics resources (PRIME and First Steps in Mathematics) at Grades 3, 4 and 5 (anglophone).
- Prepared a professional development module on mathematics for teachers in Grades 4 and 5 (francophone).
- Developed a survey for elementary teachers to determine the need for new science resources (both sectors).

Commitment # 3: To Help Children Develop a Passion for Learning

Our education system has a responsibility to help young people understand their world and their role as an active citizen. At the same time, we must prepare them for work and for lifelong learning. And we must make sure they have the opportunity to find something at school that excites and motivates them, and at which they can succeed.

Roughly 50% of Grade 12 students volunteer at least one hour a week in their community, and approximately 11% volunteer five hours or more per week. 87% of anglophone and 89% of francophone high school graduates indicate they plan to vote in a student council election at university or college.

Targets (Grades 6-12)

- 90% of high school graduates report that they intend to vote in the first election for which they are eligible (federal, provincial, municipal).
- NB's post-secondary participation rate is among the top three in Canada, and an increasing proportion obtain a post-secondary credential.
- NB is in the top three provinces in Canada for high school graduation.
- 90% of graduates report that they have had opportunities to take courses in the trades, the arts, or co-op or volunteer experience.

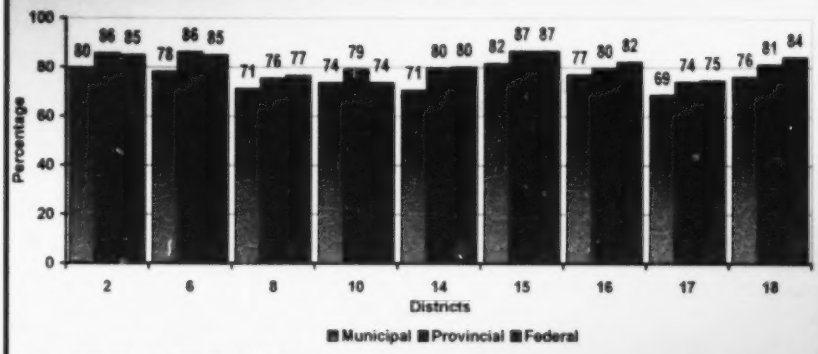
New Brunswick has surpassed the targets for high school graduation and post-secondary participation. Another key indicator of success would be post-secondary completion.

Benchmarks

Measure	Target 2013	2005-2006	2006-2007	
High school graduates plan to vote (federal, provincial, municipal elections).	**90%**	81.2%* 81.2%* 75.5%*	Results available spring 2008	Federal - Anglophone Provincial - Anglophone Municipal - Anglophone
		86.8%* 86.9%* 84.8%*	Results available spring 2008	Federal - Francophone Provincial - Francophone Municipal - Francophone
Students have opportunities to participate in the trades, the arts, or co-op or volunteer experience.	**90%**	-	***	Anglophone
		-	***	Francophone
Strong high school graduation	**Among top 3 provinces**	2nd** (82%)	-	**Province**
Strong post-secondary participation	**Among top 3 provinces**	3rd** (37.4%)	-	**Province**

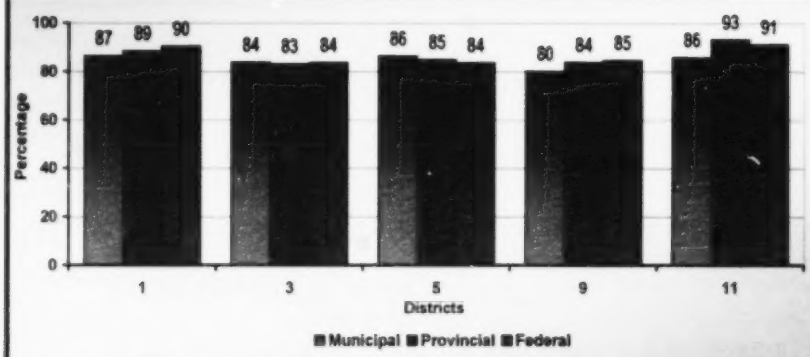
* Source: NB Exit Survey (Grade 12 students only).
** Source: Statistics Canada 2002-2003.
*** Developing a data-gathering mechanism for 2007-2008.
Numbers in bold pink font show where we have reached or surpassed the target.

Voting intention - Anglophone sector



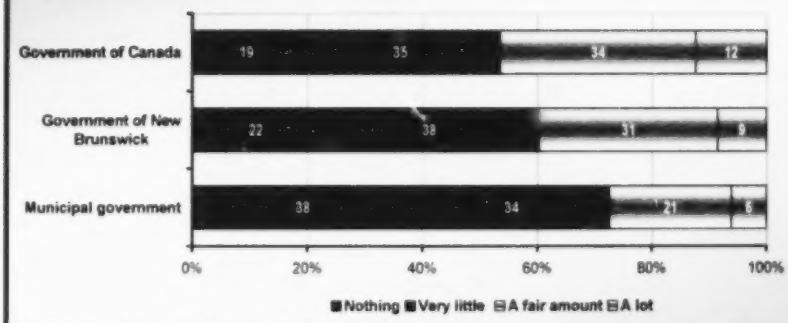
Source: NB Exit Survey 2006 (Grade 12 students)

Voting intention - Francophone sector



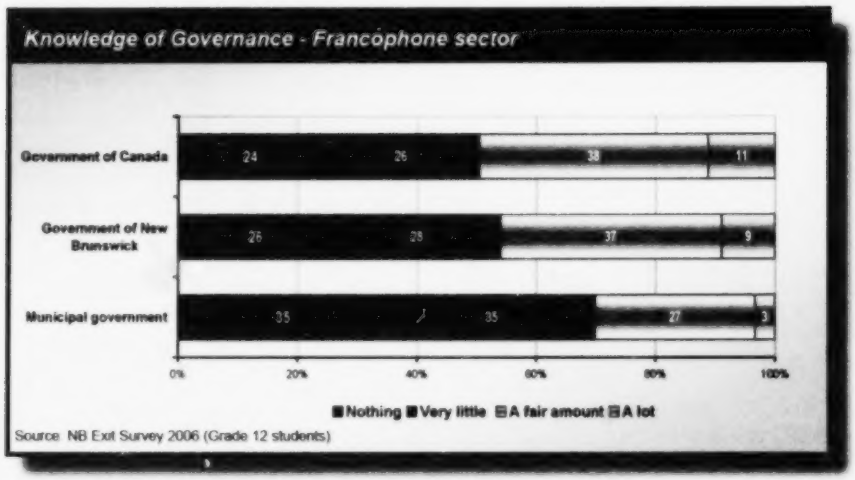
Source: NB Exit Survey 2006 (Grade 12 students)

Knowledge of Governance - Anglophone sector



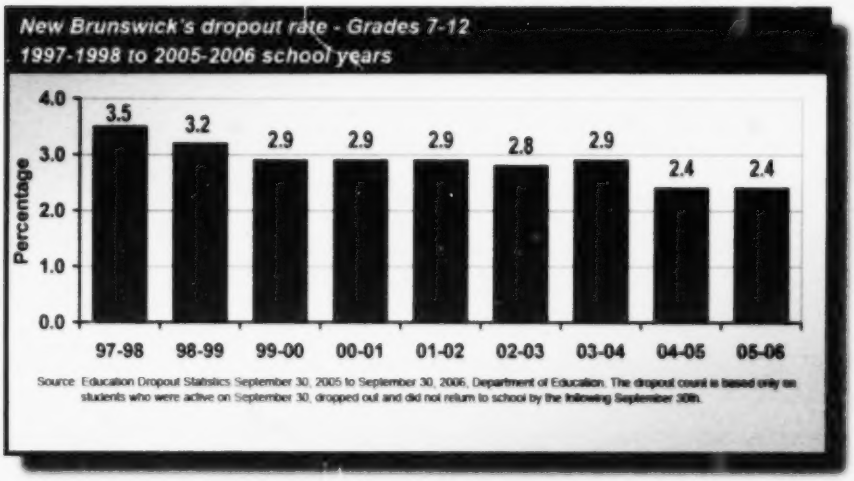
Source: NB Exit Survey 2006 (Grade 12 students)

Exit Survey results show that although graduates plan to vote, they have limited understanding of the roles of the different levels of government.

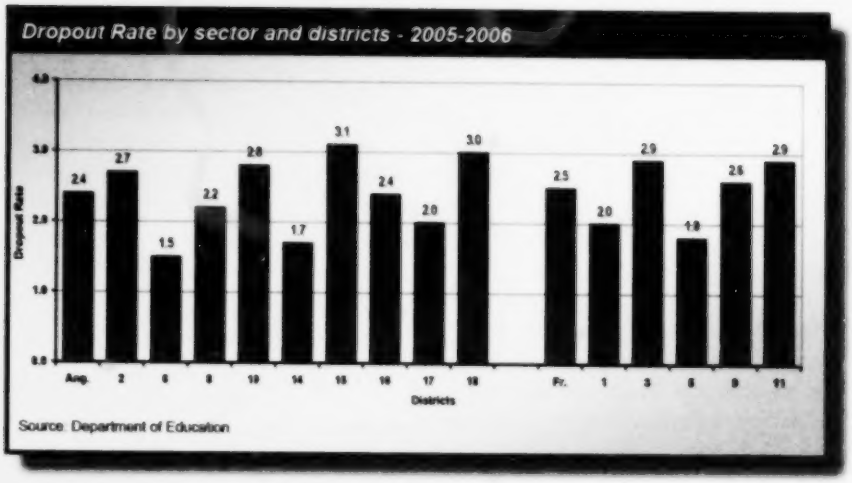


Dropout rates

When students are motivated to learn they are less likely to drop out of school. While New Brunswick's dropout rate for Grades 7-12 is relatively low at 2.4% (2005-2006), it still means that approximately 1,400 students are leaving school each year without a diploma. The dropout rate is higher for boys than girls - 2.9% compared with 1.9% - and higher again for First Nations students enrolled in public school (approximately 8.0%).



New Brunswick has one of the lowest dropout rates in the country. The percentage varies by district.



Steps taken

Each child has a unique set of strengths and abilities. When those skills are not recognized or appreciated, students can easily lose their innate love of learning. We must take steps to draw out those strengths and find ways to excite children about the world in which they live. As such, since the release of ***When kids come first***, we have:

- Started work on developing a strengths-based guidance program.
- Maintained 70 high school online courses (anglophone - 47; francophone - 23).
- Conducted research and initiated discussions regarding a policy for rural and small schools to work in conjunction with the Community Schools policy.
- Started work on the *Diversity in Learning Initiative* to increase learning opportunities in the trades and the arts.
- Provided students the opportunity to participate in 12 for-credit courses offered by two Université de Moncton campuses (francophone).
- Launched a *Ministerial Task Force on Citizenship Education* (anglophone).

Commitment # 4: To Give Educators the Tools to Innovate and Lead

Our teachers are professionals who deserve the tools and the opportunities to create, innovate and educate. We must make sure that when innovative projects are funded and evaluated, the successful ones are shared and replicated around the province.

Targets (Grades 6-12)

- 90% of teachers report they have been successful in integrating technology in teaching their students.
- An increasing percentage of principals report that projects from the *Innovative Learning Fund* are having a positive impact on teaching and learning in their schools.

Individual teachers and school teams must be supported in speeding up the implementation of good ideas.

Benchmarks

Measure	Target 2013	Year	
Teachers successfully integrate technology in teaching their students.	**90%**	*	Anglophone
		*	Francophone
		*	**Province**
Innovative Learning Fund projects have a positive impact on schools.	**Increasing percentage**	*	Anglophone
		*	Francophone
		*	**Province**

* Developing a data-gathering mechanism for 2007-2008.

In today's technology-rich world, computers are an important tool for teachers and students alike. This is especially true when their use is fully integrated across the curriculum, and they are used to promote a student-centred approach to learning. In our upcoming teacher survey we will be asking teachers to tell us how well they have managed to integrate technology into the teaching and learning process.

Next year, with the introduction of the *Innovative Learning Fund* in 2007-2008, we will start asking principals what sort of impact funded projects are having on teaching and learning in their schools.

The 2006 Exit Survey showed that Grade 12 anglophone students were satisfied with their ability to use computers effectively. However, 25% were dissatisfied with the opportunities their school gave them to improve their computer skills, and 30% were dissatisfied with online courses available at their school. Approximately 40% of respondents indicated they were enrolled in an online course during their high school years, and 63% of those students indicated they were satisfied with the online course.

Anglophone Grade 12 students responding to the survey were comfortable using computer technology as a learning tool. About 90% said they often use computer technology at home and 79% at school, as a source of research for school projects. However, only half said that their teachers used computer technology as a learning tool.

Francophone Grade 12 students responding to the survey were comfortable using computer technology as a learning tool. About 78% said they often use computer technology at home and 60% at school, as a source of research for school projects. However, only 36% said that their teachers used computer technology as a learning tool.

The 2006 Exit Survey showed that Grade 12 francophone students were satisfied with their ability to use computers effectively. However, 36% were dissatisfied with the opportunities their school gave them to improve their computer skills, and 35% were dissatisfied with online courses available at their school. Approximately 35% of respondents indicated they were enrolled in an online course during their high school years, and half of those students indicated they were satisfied with the online course.

Innovative Learning Fund

The purpose of the *Innovative Learning Fund* is to provide financial support to innovative educators by investing in original projects, led by teachers and school teams, which can subsequently be shared with and replicated in other schools.

The fund is open to any teacher, school or school district that is part of the New Brunswick public education system. The levels of funding for projects are:

- Up to $2,500 per project. Projects are mostly single classroom initiatives.
- $2,500 - $20,000 per project. Projects must involve multiple classrooms in one or more schools.
- $20,000 - $100,000 per project. Projects must involve multiple classrooms in more than one school or district.

Steps taken

Since the release of ***When kids come first***, we have:

- Created 14 new teacher positions for coordinating the *Innovative Learning Fund* initiatives in districts.
- Designed and implemented the *Innovative Learning Fund*, with an initial investment of $5 million.
- Established a review committee for *Innovative Learning Fund* applications (over 450 received to date).
- Added approximately 50 new Grade 8 classes to the one on one laptop project. This project now impacts approximately 160 classrooms at a cost of $7.2 million for 2007-2008.
- Developed a new online *Teachers' Virtual Resource Centre*.

Commitment # 5: To Live Up to the Promise of Inclusion

Inclusive education means making every possible effort to meet the diverse learning needs of all students and to ensure each child reaches his or her full potential.

The MacKay report on inclusive education is the framework that will guide development of a more inclusive education system in New Brunswick, and help ensure that each child reaches his or her full potential. Our school system is recognized nationally and internationally for its strong commitment to inclusive education practices and can be credited with great achievements in special education over the past decade.

Targets

- 80% of students with Special Education Plans are meeting identified learning outcomes, and interventions are in place for the remaining 20%.
- An increasing percentage of teachers report that gifted students are given the opportunity to reach their full potential at school.
- 90% of students and parents report that students received the services they needed to support their learning.

Benchmarks

Measure	Target 2013	2005-2006	2006-2007	
Students with Special Education Plans meet identified learning outcomes/those not meeting outcomes have interventions in place.	80/20%	-	*	Anglophone
		-	*	Francophone
Gifted students have opportunities to reach their full potential at school.	Increasing percentage	-	*	Anglophone
		-	*	Francophone
Students and parents report students have the services needed to support learning.	90% (parents)	-	*	Anglophone
		-	*	Francophone
	90% (students)	74%**	78%**	Anglophone
		83%**	86%**	Francophone

* Developing a data-gathering mechanism for 2007-2008.
** Source: NB Exit Survey (Grade 12 students only).

Steps taken

Since the release of ***When kids come first***, we have:

- Added 168 new teacher positions to lower maximum class size by one student in all grades.
- Added 50 new methods and resource teachers in response to MacKay recommendations to work towards bringing the ratio to 1:200.
- Provided autism training for 100 school staff. Four hundred people will receive this training.
- Started work on an autism strategy.
- Worked with the Ministerial Committee on Inclusive Education to prioritize implementation of MacKay recommendations.
- Started work on a *Provincial Learning Disabilities Strategy.*
- Provided input to the Human Rights Commission's guidelines on "reasonable accommodation" and "undue hardship".

Commitment # 6:
To Engage Communities and Partners in Improving Schools

One of our greatest strengths in New Brunswick is the extent to which our communities are close-knit and cooperative. If we can rally communities to support schools and, in turn, encourage schools to open their doors more to the community, our kids will benefit.

Districts are engaged in exploring the community schools model, as a way to support children's learning and achievement.

Target

- At least 75 community schools are operating in New Brunswick, with support from the community and the private sector.

Benchmark

Measure	Target Phase 1	Target Phase 2	2007-2008	
Community schools operate with support from the community and the private sector.	30	45	11	Anglophone
			11	Francophone
			22	**Province**

Our experience with the pilot of the community schools concept has enabled us to develop a strategy for the rest of the province. With the support of communities and the private sector, community schools will become more and more the norm in New Brunswick.

Steps taken

Since the release of ***When kids come first***, we have:

- Created 30 new teacher positions to coordinate Community Schools initiatives in districts.
- Identified 11 anglophone and 11 francophone schools for designation as Community Schools starting in 2007-2008.
- Worked with districts to implement a Community Schools pilot.
- Initiated discussions both centrally and locally with other government departments to provide relevant community services through Community Schools.
- Created partnerships and explored further arrangements with community organizations and the private sector to expand learning opportunities in schools, including the New Brunswick Business Council.

Commitment # 7:
To Promote Cultural Identity and Linguistic Growth

A strong francophone identity...

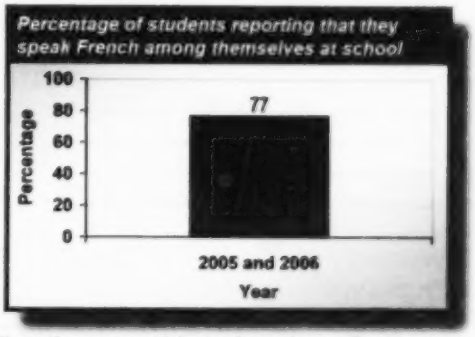
Minority language populations face particular challenges in maintaining their language and culture. In the francophone sector, the school plays an essential role in helping students develop a strong linguistic and cultural identity. Surveys conducted in the francophone sector between 2005 and 2006 revealed that 77% of students reported that they speak French among themselves at school.

Francophone students must be encouraged to recognize their unique culture, language and francophone identity.

For the francophone sector, it is particularly important that students learn their language well and develop a strong sense of their cultural identity.

Learning a second language...

Our dual English and French education systems give our kids unique opportunities to retain their own culture and language while fully experiencing another. By the same token, New Brunswick's economic growth and development will be highly influenced by our ability to make the most of our "bilingual advantage".



Our first priority is to ensure that students develop strong skills in their first official language. At the same time, in a bilingual province, it is also important that they are able to function effectively in their second language. Both sectors must take steps to improve second language acquisition.

Target

- 70% of high school graduates are able to function effectively in speaking their second official language.

Significant improvements must be made to second language programs.

Benchmark

Measure	Target 2013	2005-2006	2006-2007	
Students function effectively in speaking their second official language.*	**70%**	0.4%**	N/A	Anglophone (English)
		87%**	N/A	Anglophone (French Immersion)
		34%**	N/A	Anglophone (total)
		60%***	62%***	Francophone

* Achieving an intermediate level on the oral assessment is considered "functioning effectively".
** Grade 10 results - sample survey. Students are assessed every 2 years.
*** Grade 10 results.
Numbers in bold pink font show where we have surpassed the target.

Improving education for First Nations students...

Our statistics show that a greater percentage of First Nations students are experiencing difficulties on provincial assessments. As our First Nations' population continues to grow, our attention must be turned to addressing the specific needs of these children in the school system.

Target

- First Nations students achieve at levels comparable with their peers on provincial assessments.

Steps must be taken to improve the achievement of First Nations children.

Benchmark

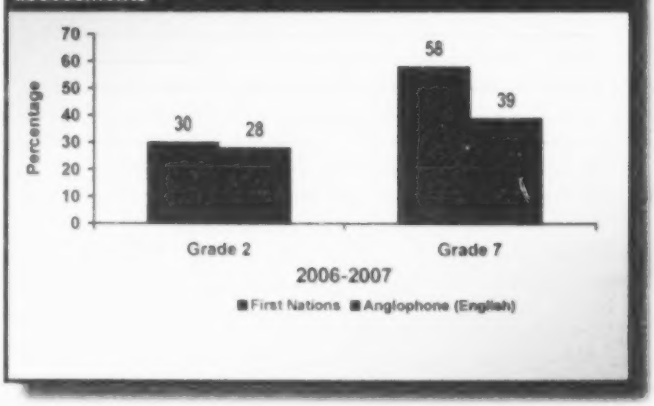
Measure	Target 2013	2006-2007	
First Nations students achieve at the same level as their peers on provincial assessments.	**On par with peers**	Experiencing difficulty: Reading Grade 2 - First Nations - 30% Grade 2 - Anglophone - 28% Grade 7 - First Nations - 58% Grade 7 - Anglophone - 39%	Anglophone (English)*

* A very small number of First Nations students attend francophone public schools

Thirty percent of First Nations students living on-reserve and attending public school experienced difficulty on the Grade 2 reading assessment, compared with 28% of anglophone students in the English program. As well, 50% of First Nations students experienced difficulty on the writing portion, compared with 42% of students.

Fifty-eight percent of First Nations students living on-reserve and attending public school experienced difficulty on the Grade 7 reading assessment, compared with 39% of anglophone students in the English program. As well, 66% of First Nations students experienced difficulty on the writing portion, compared with 57% of students.

First Nations students experiencing difficulty in reading assessments



Steps taken

Since the release of ***When kids come first***, we have:

- Led a project to develop, produce and distribute a "Trousse du passeur culturel" which assembles information, tools and resources to help francophone schools create a cultural environment for students where francophone communities are a minority in Canada. The project is a joint initiative between la Fédération canadienne des directions d'écoles francophones (FCDEF), l'Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française (ACELF), la Fédération culturelle canadienne-française (FCCF), and the New Brunswick Department of Education.
- Provided language upgrading to 696 francophone students in 2006-2007.
- Appointed two commissioners to review French Second Language programming, with a report expected early in 2008.
- Supported Heritage Week 2007 ("Our Rights, Our Freedoms ~ Our Heritage – Nos droits, nos libertés ~ notre patrimoine"), involving a total of 233 schools, 100 communities, and 62,000 students.
- Piloted new French second language resources (anglophone – Grades 9 and 10).
- Piloted an intensive English second language program in District 9.
- Introduced a new English second language program in Grade 12 (francophone).
- Developed a provincial education strategy for First Nations students.

Commitment # 8: To Create Healthy and Safe Schools

Our children may have a shorter life expectancy than we do.

We want New Brunswick students and school staff to be safe and healthy. This means finding ways to help students adopt more active, healthy lifestyles; taking steps to prevent bullying, discrimination and violence; and investing in our school buildings so they are safer places in which to learn and work.

Targets

- The percentage of children and youth who are considered active enough for optimal growth and development increases by 10 percentage points.
- An increasing percentage of students in Grades 6-12 report they feel safe and belong in their school; the level of safety reported by students with particular learning challenges is comparable to the level reported by other students; bullying behaviours decrease steadily in New Brunswick schools.
- 100% of schools have adequate emergency preparedness plans and lock-down procedures in place, in collaboration with appropriate authorities.

A child's sense of safety and well-being is an important pre-condition to learning.

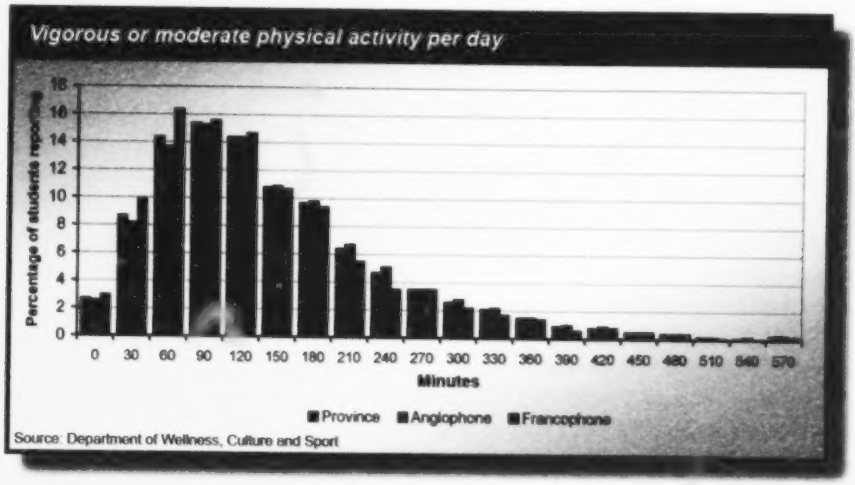
Benchmarks

Measure		Target 2013	2006-2007		
Children and youth are active enough to ensure the best possible growth and development.		Increasing percentage (10%)	**		Anglophone
			**		Francophone
			46%*		**Province**
Students feel safe.	Students in Grades 6-12 report feeling safe at school.	Increasing percentage	82.3%***		Anglophone
			86.9%***		Francophone
			83.6%***		**Province**
	Students with special needs feel safe.	Comparable to their peers	**		Anglophone
			**		Francophone
	Bullying behaviours decrease.	Decreasing percentage	**		Anglophone
			**		Francophone
Schools have adequate emergency preparedness plans and lock-down procedures.		100%	Emergency plans	Lock-down procedures	
			100%	100%	Anglophone
			84%	89%	Francophone

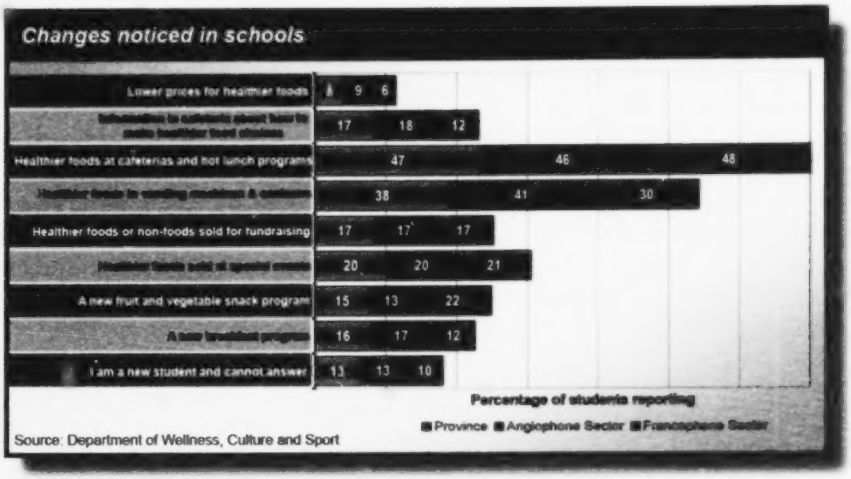
* Data from Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, Physical Activity Monitor - 2001.
** Developing a data-gathering mechanism for 2007-2008.
*** New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey 2006-2007 (Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport)

Canada's Physical Activity Guide advises all children and youth to increase their moderate and vigorous daily physical activity to reach a minimum of 90 minutes per day. It also recommends a decrease in sedentary/screen time by 90 minutes per day.

The New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey (2006-2007) provides a snapshot of students' perceptions of their own physical activity and sedentary time habits. According to the Survey almost 3% of students had no physical activity at all in the previous week, approximately 40% were below or just at the 90 minute minimum recommended, and 60% appeared to be meeting or exceeding the 90 minute minimum. Regarding sedentary activities, the majority of students, about 58%, reported that they spend 1-3 hours per day in sedentary activities, while 28% reported spending more than 3 hours in sedentary activity per day.



Canada's Food Guide recommends that youth need to eat between 6-8 servings of vegetables and fruit daily. The Student Wellness Survey indicates that most of the students reported eating fruit and vegetables and drinking juice only once on the day before the survey. On a more positive note, many schools in New Brunswick have begun implementing new programs to improve access to healthy foods during the school day. Most predominantly, students noted changes in school cafeterias and hot lunch programs, vending machines and canteens, and foods sold for fundraising.



Steps taken

We know that inactivity worsens as children grow older and that teenagers, especially teen girls, are less active now than they have ever been, which can result in obesity, depression and low self-esteem. We also know that bullying, harassment, violence and intimidation are on the rise in schools. As such, since the release of ***When kids come first***:

- Began revising Policy 703 – *Positive Learning Environment,* with a view to better addressing bullying and harassment, and adding a Student Code of Conduct.
- Updating/developing materials with non-governmental organizations on dating violence, discrimination and homophobia.
- Invited successful francophone schools to share their best practices which contribute to a positive learning environment.
- Started developing a Physical Education and Activity Action Plan designed to meet the target of providing 150 minutes of quality physical education and activity per week at school (anglophone).
- The Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport designed a pedometer challenge in schools to help create an active environment, due to start on a pilot basis in 2007-2008.
- 22,000 children and youth from around the province participated in the Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport's GO NB! – Taking Action Through Sport Program, which delivers sporting opportunities to under-represented youth populations.
- Invested in the School Communities in ACTION program that helps schools adopt, implement and maintain a variety of physical activity opportunities.

Accountability

In ***When kids come first*** we committed to ensuring that New Brunswick's education system would be accountable and transparent – for the public, parents and learners. This means setting and communicating clear targets and standards, monitoring our progress and reporting on results.

The targets we set in our education plan represent our accountability framework. That is not to say, however, that the Department, school districts and schools cannot, and should not, report on other measures of interest to our education partners.

This ***Benchmark Report*** for New Brunswick's education system sets out where we stand today on the targets we have to reach. And it is clear that we must work with a strong sense of urgency, and by engaging all our partners, to make improvements in our results. Future reports will show the progress we make, year over year.

Other accountability measures we have taken since the release of ***When kids come first*** are:

- Scheduled individual meetings with school districts to review District Improvement Plans and performance reports.
- Initiated work with partners to develop an assessment policy framework that clearly shows what is tested, why and how.
- Prepared for release a provincial-level report of results on an Exit Survey of Grade 12 students regarding their high school experience and provided district-level data to school districts.
- Released a report on the number of students who dropped out of school.
- Established a Department-District Working Group on Targets and Reports.

Looking ahead

When kids come first (WKCF) sets a clear direction to realize the vision that we can *"build the best education system in Canada"*. A self-sufficient New Brunswick will accept no less.

An important step in reaching that destination is knowing the current position of New Brunswick's education system. This is essential in order to build on what is working and to address challenges before they become obstacles.

That is why we have produced this ***Benchmark Report***. It provides a snapshot of where New Brunswick's education system is right now. The 23 targets reported on here are the key indicators that need to be focused on now to transform the system by 2013.

A ***Progress Report*** will be published annually in the fall and will measure the progress on the key indicators and on the actions undertaken as part of WKCF. These actions include: the *I'm Ready For School Initiative* that will prepare children and their families for school entry; the *I Can Learn Initiative* designed to ensure kids acquire the basics in literacy, numeracy, and science by the end of Grade 5; the launch of community schools which will help support children's learning in communities throughout New Brunswick; and the *Innovative Learning Fund*, which will help ensure that innovative projects led by teachers and school teams are replicated throughout the province.

By reporting on a consistent basis, we will help keep all education partners accountable and focused on the progress we need to make in our public education system.

As New Brunswick students move through the three fundamental stages of their journey through the public education system, we must also keep in mind the three clear goals of WKCF, namely:

1. Every child will arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.
2. Every child will leave Grade 5 having mastered the tools to learn – reading, writing and numeracy.
3. Every child will graduate from high school having had the opportunity to discover his or her personal strengths and to find something he or she loves doing.

This is how we will measure success. The targets are ambitious. The challenges are daunting. The potential is unlimited. Our role is to inspire today's students so they can lead New Brunswick to self-sufficiency tomorrow.

A Benchmark Report on the targets of When kids come first can be found on the Department of Education website at:
www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp – click on ***When kids come first***.

We would appreciate receiving your feedback on this report.

Email us at: http://www.gnb.ca/include/0000/include/sendmail-e.asp
Or write to:
"A Benchmark Report on the targets of When kids come first"
Department of Education
Place 2000, 250 King Street
Fredericton, NB E3B 9M9

Ce document est également disponible en français.

Resources

New Nouveau Brunswick

Department of Education Annual Report
Department of Education website
http://www.gnb.ca/0000/pub-e.asp

For more information regarding **Evaluation**, please see the following:
Department of Education website
www.gnb.ca/0000/anglophone-e.asp, click on **Assessment and Evaluation**

***Report Card* – Anglophone school districts**
Department of Education website
www.gnb.ca/0000/anglophone-e.asp – click on **Assessment and Evaluation,** then click on **Other**

For more information about your child's school and the school district, please see the following:
Anglophone district websites:

District 2 – Moncton:	http://www.district2.nbed.nb.ca/
District 6 – Rothesay:	http://www.district6.nbed.nb.ca/
District 8 – Saint John:	http://www.district8.nbed.nb.ca/
District 10 – St. Stephen:	http://www.district10.nbed.nb.ca/
District 14 - Woodstock:	http://www.district14.nbed.nb.ca/
District 15 – Dalhousie:	http://www.district15.nbed.nb.ca/
District 16 – Miramichi:	http://www.district16.nbed.nb.ca/
District 17 – Oromocto:	http://www.district17.nbed.nb.ca/
District 18 – Fredericton:	http://www.district18.nbed.nb.ca/

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